

## Lab integrates and builds disaster preparedness system

by *Fran Crumb, Information Directorate*

ROME, N.Y. — Earthquakes. Wildfires. Mudslides. Add the nation's largest population into the equation and it provides the basis for a 12-month, \$191,700 contract to the Western Disaster Center, Inc. at Moffett Field, Calif., from the Air Force Research Laboratory Information Directorate.

Under the California Disaster Preparedness Network program, sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency of Arlington, Va., engineers will develop a prototype for integrating disaster preparedness systems and response systems using advanced computer networking technology.

"Our objective is to develop the California Disaster Information Network (CDIN) HAZUS prototype system," said Priscilla A. Cassidy, program manager in the directorate's Information Grid division. HAZUS is the geospatial information system software developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Institute of Building Sciences.

"We hope to demonstrate the value and utility of high performance desk-top conferencing in a Next Generation Internet (NGI) environment. The CDIN would be such an environment," Cassidy said.

Next Generation Internet is a three-year program, under which the Department of Defense will invest \$50 million as part of an inter-agency effort to advance networking technologies and new applications through deployment of national-scale test beds that are vastly superior to today's Internet. First demonstrated by the military in the 1970s, Internet technology is the foundation of today's military and commercial network systems. The NGI program will enable revolutionary capabilities of importance to both the Department of Defense and the nation as a whole.

"The long-term goal of the program is to assist California officials in reducing disaster losses through better information," Cassidy said.

"Our program will link California's existing Office of Emergency Service's Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) in Oakland to the Western Disaster Center Prototype Operations Facility at Moffett Field," Cassidy said. "Commercial, off-the-shelf desktop video conferencing and document server systems will be utilized at the two locations to demonstrate the value of placing a virtual HAZUS expert at both the Office of Emergency Services Post Earthquake Information Clearinghouse and the REOC." @